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Team Ashlyn Elizabeth walkers at Heritage Landing in April for the March of Dimes March for Babies.

Local family supports March of Dimes thanks to Ashlyn Elizabeth

By Nancy Flaska and Mary Weimer

On April 25, 2009, Team Ashlyn Elizabeth walkers were at Heritage Landing in Muskegon, ready to walk five miles for the March of Dimes March for Babies. Having raised over \$5,000 from private donors, yard sales and family and friends, the team was the top family fundraiser in the Muskegon/Grand Rapids area. April and Ryan Hamm, Ashlyn's parents, were awarded a beautiful plaque and an overnight stay in Holland.



Ashlyn Elizabeth Hamm

The couple postponed the Holland trip to concentrate on "Two Miracles, One Angel of Hope," the Hamm family benefit, held on July 18 at Pomona Park. This benefit helped the Hamm family with the medical expenses for Ashlyn.

April and Ryan Hamm were already dealing with financial struggles due to April's forced bed rest and her surgery following Ashlyn's delivery.

Ashlyn was a true fighter. Nurses called her "feisty" with an amazing personality. Even her doctors were calling her a "miracle" like her mommy. At six months, Ashlyn was sitting up, smiling, and even getting her first tooth. But despite the best efforts of her doctors, this beautiful baby lost her courageous fight for life.

"Two Miracles, One Angel of Hope" was already planned and organized, so the benefit was held. So many people attended the event, willing to pay the \$5 entrance fee. Many bought pink "Ashlyn Elizabeth" bracelets and placed bids on the many donated items in the silent auction. Over \$4,000 was raised for the family, giving Ryan and April a second chance at having a child.

On September 13, 2009, Ryan and April were chosen to be the "March of Dimes Bikers for Babies Family." April gave a powerful, love-filled speech to the more than 100 people in attendance; and a Fox 17 television interview touched the hearts of many more.

The next event in Ashlyn's honor was the March of Dimes Signature Chef's Auction at the DeVos ballroom. April and Ryan served as the host family, with April delivering the keynote speech.

"It was one of my proudest moments to listen to my baby girl talk about the need for donations to the March of Dimes to help others like her baby girl," April's mom, Nancy Flaska, said. "It left me in tears and speechless."

The largest Signature Chef's Auction in its history, the event raised over \$30,000 that night. The final amount given to March of Dimes research was \$257,000.

Family and friends celebrated Ashlyn Elizabeth's first birthday on November 14, 2009 at the VFW Post on Grand Haven Road. Along with the traditional birthday songs, balloons, and cake, a special donation was made to Toys for Tots, as each guest was asked to bring an unwrapped toy. Over 140 toys were donated. Balloons with messages attached were released, as well.



Nancy Flaska comments, "Thank you, Ashlyn Elizabeth, because I was your grandma. Thank you, April, for never forgetting the March of Dimes; and thank you, Ryan, for being the best daddy ever. Please, give to the March of Dimes. It really does help all babies that are born too soon."

"In Ashlyn's memory, in her honor, plan to participate in the March of Dimes March for Babies on May 1, 2010 at Muskegon's Heritage Landing. Our goal is to raise \$6,000 and we can do it with your help."•

Youth Club, MCC team up to offer a baseball clinic

(Submitted by the Fruitport Youth Club)

A baseball clinic, hosted by Muskegon Community College and the Fruitport Youth Club will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2010 at Muskegon Community College from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at the Bartels-Rode Gymnasium, 221 S. Quarterline Road.

The clinic is open to youth ages five through 13. Registration is \$27 (non-refundable) per person by January 6, and includes a T-shirt. Registration after January 6 is \$22 per person and does not include a T-shirt.

Parents are welcome to stay and observe during the clinic.

Head Coach Cap Pohlman will direct the clinic assisted by Gordon Bennett, Brandon Becklin and Greg Guzman.

The clinic will cover fielding, hitting, pitching, catching, sliding and more.

Participants should bring a bat, glove, tennis shoes, long pants for sliding, and only water in water bottles.

Mail registrations with payment payable to the Fruitport Youth Club, P.O. Box 103, Fruitport, MI 49415. •

Edgewood nights at Burger Crest scheduled monthly

by Mary Weimer

Here's your chance to enjoy a great meal at Burger Crest and support the students at Edgewood Elementary School at the same time.

Burger Crest will donate a portion of their sales between 4 and 7 p.m. to the school. Staff members from the school will be serving the meals and cleaning up. The dates are as follows:

Date	Supports
December 21	PTO budget
January 18	Father/daughter dance
March 15	Mother/son hoedown
April 19	Muffins with Mom and Doughnuts with Dad
May 17	PTO

Audrey Hepburn's beauty tips

- For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
- For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.
- For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.
- For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her fingers through it once a day.
- For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone.

People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed and redeemed; never throw out anyone.

Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms.

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others. •••

Baker College names summer honors students

(Courtesy, Baker College)

Students who achieve a 3.5 to 3.99 grade point average named to the Dean's list at Baker College include the following Fruitport residents.

Denise Christiansen, Robert Faith, Twosixtwo Fiveonezerozero, David Hazekamp, Hilary Hilliard, Daniel Olthof, Melanie Pastotnik, Susan Poel, Deana Richter, Jessica Sabo, Angela Sirotko, Matthew Stefanich, Tereasa Tekautz, Anna Vermaire, and Kaleigh Wagner.

Two students from Nunica were also named to the Dean's list: Leann Gould and Amanda Humpal.